

c³ anchoring the upstream duct to the upstream vessel by expanding the third expandable anchoring mechanism into the upstream vessel.

REMARKS

By this paper, claims 25, 37 and 38 have been amended. Claims 1-40 remain pending.

The undersigned wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of participating in a telephone interview on June 30, 2003, wherein the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 were discussed.

In the outstanding April 2, 2003 Office action, claims 23 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for insufficient antecedent basis. It is respectfully submitted, however, that claims 23 and 39 as amended in the April 29, 2002 Amendment satisfy the requirements of § 112. In view of the § 112 rejection of claims 25 and 38, said claims have been amended as discussed during the June 30, 2003 telephone interview and are believed to now satisfy § 112.

In the April 2003 Office action, claims 25-36 and 37-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Quiachon (5,628,783) and claims 1-31, 33 and 36-38 were rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Piplani et al. (5,489,295). It is respectfully submitted, however, that independent claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom, namely claims 2-24, recite subject matter which is patentable over the Piplani et al. reference. In particular, as is required by independent claim 1, Piplani does not teach a set of attaching mechanisms each of which are sutured to the bifurcated graft but rather discloses a spring attachment means 163 that includes hooks that accomplish engagement of the spring attachment means with a distal extremity of a second leg 117 (Col. 10, Ins. 9-44). Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that neither Quiachon et al. nor Piplani et al. teach an apparatus or a

method involving one of a first and a second release wire that operates to maintain a second or third anchoring mechanism in an unexpanded condition and in fact, the cited art teaches employing capsule assemblies for accomplishing maintaining structure in a compressed configuration. As such, it is believed that each of pending claims 1-40 recite patentable subject matter.

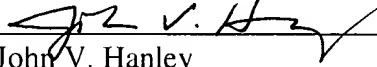
CONCLUSION

Applicants have attempted to respond to each and every rejection set forth in the outstanding Office Action. In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the application be reconsidered, the claims allowed and the application passed to issue.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current Amendment. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please enter amended claims 25, 37 and 38 and substitute the amended claims for the pending claims with the same numbers.

25. (Twice Amended) A system for placing a bifurcated graft in a lumen formed by a wall proximate a vascular bifurcation having an aneurysm, the system comprising:

a bifurcated graft having a superior extremity, an ipsilateral inferior extremity, and a contralateral inferior extremity;

a first anchoring mechanism attached to the superior extremity;

a second anchoring mechanism attached to the ipsilateral inferior extremity and configured to be self-expandable;

a third anchoring mechanism attached to the contralateral inferior extremity and configured to be self-expandable;

a first release wire releasably attached to the ipsilateral inferior extremity such that the second anchoring mechanism maintains an unexpanded condition;

a second release wire releasably attached to the contralateral inferior extremity such that the third anchoring mechanism maintains an unexpanded condition;

wherein one [or more] of the first and second release wires [themselves] operate to maintain [an anchoring mechanism] one of the second and third anchoring mechanisms in an unexpanded condition; and

a delivery catheter configured to contain the bifurcated graft, the first anchoring mechanism, the second anchoring mechanism, the third anchoring mechanism, the first release wire and the second release wire.

37. (Thrice Amended) A method of positioning a bifurcated graft across a vascular bifurcation formed by an upstream vessel a first down stream vessel and a second downstream vessel using a bifurcated graft delivery system having a first catheter having a hollow cylindrical tube, a bifurcated graft formed by an upstream duct, a first downstream duct and a second downstream duct, disposed within the first catheter, a second catheter connected to the first downstream duct and disposed within the first catheter, and a third catheter connected to the second downstream duct and folded within the first catheter, and a snare guidewire comprising the steps of:

configuring one of the first and second release wires to maintain one of the second and third anchoring mechanisms in an unexpanded condition;

placing the bifurcated graft within the hollow cylindrical tube having an inner diameter less than seven millimeters along its length;

advancing the delivery system through the first downstream vessel and into the upstream vessel;

withdrawing the first catheter such that the bifurcated graft, the second catheter and the third catheter are exposed within the upstream vessel;

unfolding the third catheter;

advancing the snare guidewire through the second downstream vessel;

snaring the third catheter with the snare catheter;

pulling the first downstream duct into the first downstream vessel by withdrawing the second catheter; and

pulling the second downstream duct into the second downstream vessel by withdrawing the third catheter.

38. (Twice Amended) A method for repairing a bifurcated vascular vessel formed by an upstream vessel a first downstream vessel and a second downstream vessel using a bifurcated graft delivery system having a delivery catheter, a bifurcated graft formed by an upstream duct, a first downstream duct and a second downstream duct, disposed within the delivery catheter, a first expandable anchoring mechanism attached to the first downstream duct, said first expandable anchoring mechanism being self-expanding, a first release wire releasably fastened to the first expandable anchoring mechanism such that the first expandable anchoring mechanism is maintained in an unexpanded state, a second expandable anchoring mechanism attached to the second downstream duct, said second expandable anchoring mechanism being self-expanding, a second release wire releasably fastened to the second expandable anchoring mechanism such that the second expandable anchoring mechanism is maintained in an unexpanded state, and a third expandable anchoring mechanism attached to the upstream duct, comprising the steps of:

configuring one [or more] of the first and second release wires [themselves] to maintain [an anchoring mechanism] one of the second and third anchoring mechanisms in an unexpanded condition;

inserting the bifurcated graft delivery system intraluminally into the bifurcated vascular vessel;

withdrawing the delivery catheter such that the bifurcated graft is exposed within the bifurcated vascular vessel;

positioning the bifurcated graft within the bifurcated vascular vessel, such that the upstream duct extends into the upstream vessel, the first downstream duct extends into the first downstream vessel, and the second downstream duct extends into the second downstream vessel;

anchoring the first downstream duct to the first downstream vessel by releasing the first release wire whereby the first expandable downstream mechanism expands into the first downstream vessel;

anchoring the second downstream duct to the second downstream vessel by releasing the second release wire whereby the second expandable downstream mechanism expands into the second downstream vessel;

anchoring the upstream duct to the upstream vessel by expanding the third expandable anchoring mechanism into the upstream vessel.

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